

News Release

U.S. Department of Justice

*United States Attorney
Northern District of Ohio*

For Release: April 17, 2008

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William J. Edwards, Acting United States Attorney for the Northern District of Ohio, and Christopher Sadowski, Special Agent in Charge, Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, Columbus Field Division, today announced that an indictment was unsealed naming 7 defendants in a 21-count indictment related to arson, mail fraud, and money laundering. This morning, arrest warrants were executed in Mahoning and Trumbull counties. Four defendants--Majeed Bazazpour, age 44, of Youngstown, Ohio; Mohammad Fard, age 44, of Canfield, Ohio; Iraj Nasser, age 48, of Poland, Ohio; and Frank Tenney, age 29, of Masury, Ohio--were arrested and are currently in custody awaiting their initial appearance scheduled later today before Magistrate Judge George J. Limbert. The three other named defendants are believed to be in Iran. The case is assigned to the docket of District Judge Lesley Wells.

The Indictment names Cyrus Ghassab, Farideh Jamali aka Jamali Farideh aka Farideh Ghassab, Majeed Bazazpour aka Majeed Bazapour aka "Mike," Jamshid Ghassab aka James Ghassab, Mohammad Fard aka "Mo," and Iraj Nasser, aka Jerry Nasser, aka Irasi Nasser,

(hereinafter referred to collectively as “co-conspirators”) in three conspiracies involving mail fraud, arson, and money laundering and related substantive counts as detailed in the press release attachment. The indictment charges that since 1994, the co-conspirators devised a scheme to defraud insurance companies and obtain money by means of false representations and used the United States mail to assist them in executing the insurance fraud scheme. Between 1995 and 2005, a total of nine fires were set at commercial businesses by one or more of the co-conspirators. The scheme involved purchasing and operating retail buildings and businesses in Mahoning and Trumbull Counties, and thereafter insuring the real property and retail businesses against losses caused by fire.

It was a further part of the conspiracy that the co-conspirators caused arson fires to occur in the insured properties and businesses and thereafter submitted claims for the losses to the insurance companies.

It was a further part of the conspiracy that the co-conspirators concealed the fraudulent scheme to profit from the arson of the properties by making material misrepresentations to the insurance companies by using multiple insurance companies, by failing to disclose prior property loss claims when applying for insurance, by using different variations of their names, by using “straw” purchasers on the property acquisitions, by changing the names of the businesses, and by altering the addresses of the businesses to be insured.

It was a further part of the conspiracy that the co-conspirators used the proceeds of the insurance claims to provide down payments for personal residences in the United States and in Iran, to obtain cash for traveling to and relocating to Iran, to reinvest in other properties and businesses, to divert assets from the United States to other countries, to compensate other members of the conspiracy, to further perpetuate the viability of the conspiracy, and to provide \$100,000 in bail money towards the release bond of co-conspirator Jamshid Ghassab from

federal custody on a pending felony case.

It was a further part of the conspiracy that in response to questions from insurance companies, insurance investigators, fire officials, and local and federal law enforcement officers regarding possible individuals who could be responsible for the arson fires, that the co-conspirators consistently named a business competitor as the likely perpetrator of the arson fires so as to misdirect investigative efforts and to avoid detection of the criminal conspiracy and its members.

The indictment was presented to the grand jury by Assistant United States Attorney Phillip J. Tripi and Special Assistant United States Attorney Ian Hoffman, following an extensive joint investigation by ATF, the Youngstown Arson Bureau, the Warren Township Police Department, the Warren Township Fire Department, Trumbull County Fire and Explosive Unit, and the Youngstown Police Department.

If convicted, each defendant's sentence will be determined by the Court after review of factors unique to the case, including the defendant's prior criminal record, if any, the defendant's role in the offense, and the characteristics of the violation. In all cases the sentence will not exceed the statutory maximum and in most cases it will be less than the maximum.

An indictment is only a charge and is not evidence of guilt. A defendant is entitled to a fair trial in which it will be the government's burden to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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PRESS RELEASE ATTACHMENT

Unsealing of Indictment in United States v. Cyrus Ghassab, et al. Case No. 4:08CR0171

DEFENDANT NAME KEY

CG= Cyrus Ghassab (Counts: 1-6, 8-12, 15, 17, & 21)
 FJ= Farideh Jamali (Counts: 1,3,12,13, 14)
 MB= Majeed Bazazpour (Counts: 1-7, 13, & 16)
 JG= Jamshid Ghassab (Counts: 1 & 3)
 MF= Mohammad Fard (Counts: 1,3,18-20)
 IN= Iraj Nasserli (Counts: 1, 12 & 13)
 FT= Frank Tenney (Counts: 2 & 11)_____

INDICTMENT INDEX

UNITED STATES V. CYRUS GHASSAB, ET AL--April 9, 2008

CT	Defendants	Charge	Penalty
1	CG FJ MB JG MF IN	Conspiracy to Commit Mail Fraud 18 U.S.C. § 371	5 yrs
2	CG MB FT	Conspiracy to Commit Arson 18 U.S.C. § 371	5 yrs
3	CG FJ MB JG MF	Conspiracy to Commit Money Laundering 18 U.S.C. § 844(h)and 2	20 yrs/500K or 2x
4	CG MB	Aiding and Abetting Arson in Commission of a Felony, 18 U.S.C. §§ 844(h)and 2	20 yrs CM
5	CG MB	Aiding and Abetting Arson in Commission of a Felony, 18 U.S.C. §§ 844(h)and 2	20 yrs CM
6	CG MB	Aiding and Abetting Arson in Commission of a Felony, 18 U.S.C. §§ 844(h)and 2	20 yrs CM
7	MB	Aiding and Abetting Arson 18 U.S.C. §§ 844(i)and 2	5 to 10 yrs
8	CG	Aiding and Abetting Attempted Arson 18 U.S.C. §§ 844(i)and 2	5 to 10 yrs

INDICTMENT INDEX
UNITED STATES V. CYRUS GHASSAB, ET AL--Continued

CT	Defendants	Charge	Penalty
9	CG	Aiding and Abetting Attempted Arson 18 U.S.C. §§ 844(i) and 2	7 to 40 yrs
10	CG	Aiding and Abetting Attempted Arson 18 U.S.C. §§ 844(i) and 2	5 to 10 yrs
11	CG FT	Aiding and Abetting Attempted Arson 18 U.S.C. §§ 844(i) and 2	5 to 10 yrs
12	CG FJ IN	Aiding and Abetting Mail Fraud 18 U.S.C. §§ 1957(a) and 2	20 yrs
13	MB FJ IN	Aiding and Abetting Mail Fraud 18 U.S.C. §§ 1957(a) and 2	20 yrs
14	FJ	Aiding and Abetting Money Laundering 18 U.S.C. §§ 1957(a) and 2	10 yrs/2x
15	CG	Aiding and Abetting Money Laundering 18 U.S.C. §§ 1957(a) and 2	10 yrs/2x
16	MB	Aiding and Abetting Money Laundering 18 U.S.C. §§ 1957(a) and 2	10 yrs/2x
17	CG	Aiding and Abetting Money Laundering 18 U.S.C. §§ 1957(a) and 2	10 yrs/2x
18	MF	Aiding and Abetting Money Laundering 18 U.S.C. §§ 1957(a) and 2	10 yrs/2x
19	MF	Aiding and Abetting Posses- sion of a Forged Security 18 U.S.C. §§ 513 and 2	10 yrs

INDICTMENT INDEX
UNITED STATES V. CYRUS GHASSAB, ET AL--Continued

<u>CT</u>	<u>Defendants</u>	<u>Charge</u>	<u>Penalty</u>
20	MF	Making False Statement 18 U.S.C. § 1001	5 yrs
21	CG	Use of a Destructive Device in the Commission of a Violent Felony 18 U.S.C. § 924(c) (1) (A)	30 yr CM

KEY FOR PENALTY COLUMN

CM= consecutive mandatory

All maximum fines are \$250,000 except count 3 which is \$500,000 or twice the amount of the loss. Those counts indicating 2X means maximum fine is \$250,000 or twice the amount of the loss, whichever is higher.

Where a range of years is indicated, the first number represents a minimum mandatory penalty and the second number represents the maximum penalty.